THE OPERA SEASON BEGINS.

VERDI'S "OTELLO" SUNG FOR THE FIRST NIGHT'S OFFERING.

Great Crowd and a Brilliant One at the Messrs. Alvarez and Scottl Heard, and the Last Named Bore Off the Honors,

The season of opera at the Metropolitan Opera House under the direction of Maurice Gran began last night with a performance of Verdi's "Otello." The season will continue for seventeen weeks. There will be performances on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturday afternoons and Saturday evenings. How many extra entertainments will be offered no one can predict at this time. There will be one this week. Mr. Grau's great and good friend, the public, will not be permitted to moan in empty dis-content. A casual onlooker must have seen last night that it had a deathless longng for opera. New York has the first-night habit in its worst form, but it is never at other times in such a frothing state of hysteria as it is on the first night of the opera

In the crowd that jammed the corridors

ast evening were high-bred women, with blood descended from earliest colonists; men whose fathers' names are written on the pages of their country's history; men whose little fingers operate the electric keys of the world's finances; men who are called "robber barons" by those who hate them and "railroad magnates" by those who merely envy them; young bucks of the social set, who drink more and dance less than they ought to; half-weaned boys, with downless upper lips, vacant eyes and falsetto voices, shrilling their puny comments on things above their ken; sap-headed imitations of them, spending whole weeks salaries on cheap and unmistakable copies of their garments; swell gamblers and other "sporty" men, with satin waistcoats and glittering watchfobs; women of society nameless, bent under their weight of costly gowns and gleaming baubles; horsey men. yet reeking with the slang of the Horse Show; fool girls, come to indulge in spasmodic worship of the tenor; half-crazed women reporters, terrified lest a Vanderbilt or an Astor might escape their count: wine hucksters, touts, glorified loafers, with incomes from heaven knows where-all in

that motley mob which constitutes the

American equivalent of tout Paris, all New

Over them, as they wrestled through the lobbies, floated the calm gaze of Max Hirsch, symbol of undisturbed authority, sign of the management that still lived. A few detectives loitered in the corridors, but there was not much for them to do. The house was packed. There was not a seat to be had. The subscription for Monday night is the largest, and those who went at the last moment had to enter into beavy negotiations with the speculators. Inside the air was heavy and oppressive. Under the first gallery, where the "standees" assemble, loaded to the lips with stentorian "bravos," it was deadly. The audiencethat part which had seats-was late; it always is. The occupants of the boxes came still later, flushed from dinners not sparing of vinous accompaniment. It was after 9 o'clock before the house settled down to consider the performance, which had been going on for an hour to a running fire of clattering doors, rattling programmes, buzzing conversation and excited comment on the gowns of well-known women of the sacred "smart set."

The inner brotherhood of the musical queried whether the presentation of "Otello as a frst-night opera betokened a change of heart on the grt of Mr. Grau. Time was when either aust or "Romeo et Ju-liette" must be sung on the opening night. liette" must be sung on the opening night. Had the impresario grown more serious? The inner brotherhood smiled It recollected that the company did not contain a famous representative of either Faust or Romeo. The principal tenor was one of robust voice and methods and he had achieved his largest success as the lyric achieved his largest success as the lyric Moor when the opera was brought forward last January for the first time since the sea-subject of microbes.

on of 1894-95. Furthermore "Otello" provides a **good** Furthermore "Otello" provides a good part for Mme. Eames, who, whether the world revolves east or west, must appear at the first performance of the season, and who generally gets any other precedence she asks for in the course of a winter. A star barytone also is required for lago, and as the small part of Emila calls for a capable contraito, the chessboard on which the manager works out the game of operations a good combination. An opera with shows a good combination. An opera with four star parts, and the tenor's his best, is a good card for the beginning when you have no sentimental lyric tenor, no poet of romance—in a word, no Jean de Reszke

in the company.
It is past the period in operatic history then "Obello" must be critically considered, thus come to stay. It is one of the noblest that come to stay. It is one of the noblest creations of a genius, which ripened like the nourishing grain with the flight of suns. The glorious golden harvest of Verdi's career came in the fulness of his years, and after the turbulent springtime of "Nabuco" and its kin, and the seething summer of "Il Trovatore" and "Traviata," in the reposeful autumn he gave us those three splendid masterpieces, "alla," "Otello" and "Falstaff." Of these the first has surely the mo

fecundity of melody, and its opportunities for sentimental love scenes make it the favorite with the public. But "Otello" overtops it in complexity of detail, in potency of desperate passion, in genuine tragic expression and in its wonders of tragic expression and in its wonders of dramatic tone painting. As for "Falstaff," that marvellous mosaic of musical depiction, in which every phrase seems big with meaning, when shall we ever hear that again? But so far as "Otello" is concerned, the plaudits of those who were visibly moved by the strenuous methods of the tenor last night served to make it seem

tenor last night served to make it seem to have attained a new popularity.

Albert Alvarez, formerly leading tenor of the Grand Opéra in Paris, is no stranger here. He has of late been one at the Grand Opéra, where Jean de Reszke, the quondam daring of New York, now sings in his place. A fair exchange is no robbery. Mr. Aldarling of New York, now sings in his place. A fair exchange is no robbery. Mr. Alvarez is a wonderfully bad Faus'; Mr. de Reszke is a thoroughly depressing Otello. As the Moor in Verdi's opera Mr. Alvarez has a congenial part. He is always happlest when he sings most loudly. He is always pictorially most satisfying when he reveals the contours of physical massiveness and the action of vigorous muscles. The Roman gladiator of "Messaline," elemental, brutal, passionate to the verge of madness, ever dwells in him.

His vocal delivery, never polished, never

His vocal delivery, never polished, never suited to refined utterance, is well adapted to the fierce utterance of Otello. Only in the love scene of the first act does this tenor fail. For the rest his Otello is a magnetic, virile and influential impersonation. His interpretation has moments of affecof artistic details is forgotten in the presence of a real dramatic force. Mr. Scotti was again the gentlemanlike, but uncontrolled, lago. There was room for doubt whether even so blind a lover as Otello would not have detected the despit of such a rudely have detected the deceit of such a rudely frank lago, but there was no question at to the gall and vinegar in his nature. Mr

to the gall and vinegar in his nature. Mr. Scotti, in a word, is not as subtle as the serpent, but he is as ventomous as the wasp; and so his sting is effective.

Mme. Eames is a most patrician Desdemona. But it is all right. Desdemona was a lady of most excellent family and her father had money. You can tell that by the style of the house and the number of ottendants—only you have to go to see the olay, because the opera does not begin ill after the marriage. The rôle of Desdemona does not call for anything more than hearty of person, grace and dignity of demeanor and a good voice. Mme. Elmes has all these qualifications for the part and she is, therefore, eminently satisfactory in it.

others? River por this former's for

question be asked: "Was Eames in good voice last night?" Naturally; for this is star opera, and the state of the expensive volces is matter for deepest anxiety. Let it be recorded then, that the vocal darlings of the public heard last night have returned in an excellent state of preservation. They have kept their voices "unspotted from the world," and they sing as they did of yore. Mr. Alvarez has the same robustious upper tones; the same barytonal lower ones. His voice comes from the same various parts of his frame and he has not lost a single register. Neither has he lost his fondness for subcutaneous departures from the pitch; they make the flesh creep.

Mine, Fames's voice has all its rich, velvety beauty and its winning personality. It is a voice with an aristocratic character and it is used with lovely art. It was impaired by two or three temporary troubles last night, but it was good to hear.

Mr. Scotti, however, easily bore off the vocal honors of the evening. He was in superb voice and he sang with consummate art. He had abundant power in the forceful passages and in those requiring finesse he was most admirable. The minor parts were in the same hands as last season. The chorus sang with plenty of spirit, and not yet having been weatled of life by many rehearsals and trips to Philadelphia, had a good quality of tone.

The orchestra was substantially that of last season, a good, serviceable body of competent musicians, of which more can be said in the course of the winter. In the second act the requirements of the score were satisfied by the use of mandellins on the stage in the homage to Desdemona. The effect was charming and disclosed now skilfully Verdi had managed the episode to lighten the act. Mr. Mancinelli, who was not here last winter and who was cordially welcomed, conducted with his usual zeal and authority. To-morrow night Rossini's "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" will be given and Mine. Sembrich will make her reappearance.

OPERA STANDEES-GRAU WINS. Appellate Division Holds That the Foyer Is Not a Passageway.

The Appeliate Division of the Supreme Court has affirmed the decision of the Eighth District Municipal Court, in dismissing the suit brought by Fire Commissioner Sturgis against Maurice Grau, as proprietor of the Metropolitan Opera House, to recover penalties for allowing persons to stand in the foyer at the back of the orchestra seats. The Fire Commissioner contended that the fover was a passage. in which it was forbidden to allow spectators to stand, and that the blocking up of the passage constituted a public danger in case of fire

in case of fre.

Grau's position was that he had not violated the law, that the fover space was not a passage, having formerly been partly occupied by seats, and that it was perfectly legal for him to designate and use such a space as standing room. The lower court dismissed the suit, and Justices Blanchard and Freedman uphold the decision, on the ground that the fover could not be called a passageway, in the meaning of the statute. a passageway in the meaning of the statute. Justice MacLean, in a dissenting opinion, says that the removal of the seats transformed the foyer into a passage, and that therefore the decision of the lower court should be reversed.

OUTSIDE THE OPERA. . . Arrival and Departure Arrangements Are

Better Than in Former Years. The electric carriage-call system had a thorough trial at the Metropolitan Opera House last night, and was pronounced a great improvement over the old way of calling carriages by megaphones and yell-ing boys. It is even quicker than the old

The curious, who like to linger around The curious, who like to linger around the opera house to see the crowds arrive and depart, were not much in evidence, the rain kept them under shelter. The police arrangements for keeping the carriages in line were excellent and there was little confusion, though there were more than three hundred carriages.

NEW PLAYS AND OLD THIS WEEK. Circle Theatre Opens and Mrs. Osborn's New Piece to Begin Other Changes.

Mrs. Robert Osborn will offera novelty Thursday night at her diminutive play house n West Forty-fourth street. It is called 'Fad and Folly." Harry Conor, a new member of Mrs. Osborn's company, will

A new theatre opens to-morrow night It is to be known as the Circle Theatre and is at Broadway and Sixtleth street. "Aristocracy" will be the introductory offering. Bijou Fernandez is the leading member of the Herbert stock company, which will make weekly changes of plays at the new house. The management promises that only the best plays will be given, always at popular prices.

Mrs. Fiske has settled down for a long run at the Manhattan in "Mary of Magdala." She plays to crowded houses nightly. Viola Allen in "The Eternal City" at the Victoria, is also drawing crowded houses. William Faversham, in the comedy "Impudence" at the Empire, has begun a prosperous engagement. Ethel Barrymore in "Carrots" and "A Country Mouse" has made the hit of her career, while Mary Mannering in "The Stubbornness of Geraldine" at the Garrick was never seen to better advantage. Miss Mannering's husband, James K. Hackett, crowds Wallack's with "The

Mrs. Leslie Carter ends her long stay this week in "Du Barry." She gives her last performance on Saturday night at the Belasco Theatre. Mrs. Le Moyne ends her stay at the Garden this week in "Among Those Present," William Gillette and "Sherlock Holmes" at the Knickerbocker leave us, also. Martin Harvey, the English actor, ends his engagement this week.

Chauncey Olcott in "Old Limerick Town" has three more weeks at the Fourteenth Street Theatre. Anna Held in "The Little Duchess" has begun her second and last week at the Grand Opera House. "A Country Girl" has entered on its tenth Country Girl" has entered on its tenth week and has been such a success that it may finish the season at Daly's. Mabelle Gilman has a rôle that fits her in "The Mocking Bird" at the Bijou and she makes the most of it. "The Ninety and Nine" has lost none of its popularity at the Academy of Music. Many new features and songs have been added to "The Silver Slipper" at the Broadway. "A Chinese Honeymoon" shows no signs of waning popularity at the Casino. Virginia Harned and "Iris" have only two weeks more to stay at the Criterion. She could profitably remain here for several months.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell and her company

remain here for several months.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell and her company are at the Harlem Opera House this week.

"Are You a Mason?" is the attraction at the West End. "Kidnapped" is the play this week at the American, and the Star has "A Kentucky Feud." "The Game of Life" is at the Third Avenue. The Murray Hill's change of bill is "The Mercy Wives of Windser."

Straight vaudeville is offered at Keiths.

of Windser."
Straight vaudeville is offered at Keiths,
Tony Pastor's and at Proctor's Twentythird Street Th atre. Proctor's Fifth Avenue
offers "Rosedale" and vaudeville, the Fiftyeighth street house has "The Strangiers
of Paris" and vaudeville, and the 125th
street house "Lost in Siberia" with Billy
Clifford as the top liner in vaudeville. The
Dewey has a new burlesque show, and
De Kolta, the magician is still at the Eden
Musée. Bostock's animals remain only Musee, Bostock's animals remain only this week at the St. Nicholas Rink, "Sally in Our Alley" came back to the New York last night. The original cast remains. Hurtig & Seamon at their music hall, have a first-class vaudeville show. Pauline Hall heads their bill.

A monster musicale and enehre will be held to-fxy in the Grand Central Palace, Lexington avenue and Forty-third street. for the benefit of St. Agnes's Church.

"The Sun's" a Storehouse sea at turntture Read it and give a

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EDWARD BOK, EDITOR OF THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL, WRITES:

"It is about as close to a model Christmas magazine as I can imagine possible to conceive and carry out."

"Audrey," a dramatization of Mary Johnm's novel, by Harriet Ford and E. F. Boddington, was presented at the Madison Square Theatre last night. Eleanor Robson eaded an excellent company and played the wood nymph Audrey. For several reasons the tragic end of the book has een altered to a "happy" one in the stage ersion; Audrey marries Howard, and Hugon, e halfbreed kills himself, thus placating he sensibilities of the matinée girl. Of a londay night that same girl can witness ragedy dire and bloody; but Saturday ternoon she prefers her plays charged with candied sentiment and whiffs of violets.

And "Audrey" seems to have been primarily designed for the matinee girl.

The dramatization of most novels usually nor flesh nor good red fiction. "Audrey" is no exception. It has gracious moments pretty speeches, sentiments, situations six unrelated episodes during which he spectator awaits-and it comes not. Those in the audience last night who had not read the novel, knew before the final urtain dropped that it was better than he play, and it needed not the sixth sense of clairvoyancy to pass this judgment.

The first half of Act I. was comic opera pure and simple, with all the joyous irrelevancy of that entertaining form of art. But at its close Audrey reveals in a single flash her nature. Curtain! Act II. shows us the home of Audrey's protectors. Again we await the act that will hasten the Anny Ricard, Martin Harvey and many gain we await the act that will hasten the tie. Despite the pretty love advances to the pair and the baleful arrow—nothing, o struggle, no drama. Curtain! Act III. Herr Conried provided an entertaining

was writ large in every act.

devised of scenes. There is a row at the close ted up to in an absurdity ineffective manner. Act V. Shades of Clyde Fitch, hawthorne or any one!

A church scene, a denunciation, a feminine scolding, a rade Indian embrace and Audrey despairs. Yet nothing has happened, Curtain! Last act semething does Audrey marries and all Miss Johnston's careful preparation in the novel goes for naught. There is no tragedy. It may been the honors of the Björnson play last

THE PLAY HAS A HAPPY ENDING
TO SUIT THEATRE FOLKS.

The Heroine of the Stage Marries "Howard" and the Hairbreed Kills Himself, so the Matinee Girl is Placated—No Better Than Most Dramatized Novels.

K. Hadley wrote the incidental music. He also conducted it. Within its bars was more action than in the entire dramatization—libretto is a better word. Mr. Hadley's prelude contains a musical summary of the novel—not the play—and there are frequent dances interspersed throughout. Audrey's woo is also depicted, as is the revengeful character of the Indian. This latter was the most characteristic. The audience was friendly. There were applicable and flowers for Miss Robson—Better Than Most Dramatized Novels.

A PROFESSIONAL MATINEE.

Heinrich Conried Gives an Invitation Per-

Yesterday afternoon Irving place looked ike an incarnated theatrical "Who's who? Director Heinrich Conried of the pretty little German theatre gave one of his always interesting professional matinees, and the "profession" responded with its usual cordiality. The boxes were filled with actors with a manager or two not missing. Lillian Russell-who seems to have solved the problem, How to Be Young, Though Beautiul-was accompanied by her sister, Hattie sults in a compound that is neither fish | Leonard, and a large flock of red and white

While the flowers bung limply over the edge of the box their owner was actually enthusiastic more than once during the afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Williams and Virginia Harned were in another box; and above them sat Ethel Barrymore accompanied by one of the Barrymore boysit doesn't matter which one, so it is a Barry.

The curious man who twisted his neel in any given direction yesterday afternoon was gratified by the faces and figures of inter glia - Mr. and Mrs. John Drew, Harry Dixey, W. H. Thompson, Herbert

ot so good as the preceding one because case happens. Curtain. Act IV., the Governor's hall, is one of the chumster, illustrated of scenes. There is a row at the

Audrey matries and all Miss Johnston's careful preparation in the novel goes for naught. There is no tragedy. It has been switched to suicide. This is not playing fair in the game. The naid-breed, despite his Sir Henry trying accent, is the one live character in the piece. However, for the same fellowed with the piece. However, for the same fellowed with seed skill. She was ably sconded by James Wissen Wissen Frogerick Perry was an active Hogor. The rest were well cast, from the Hogor of the play-several for the play-several for the piece. However, for the same fellowed gavery and its stronger for the piece. However, for the same fellowed gavery and its stronger for the piece when the honors of the Björnson play iast heard here when Mrs Patrick Campbell in the parish the chartes and there when Mrs Patrick Campbell in the honors of the Björnson play iast the honors of the Rev. The prevent of the honors of the honors of the Rev. The prevent of the honor of the Rev. Dr. John P. and Mrs. Peters of the Church of St. Michael was a happy afternoon down in Irving place.

Alexander Rottramnas Sang, carried of the honor of the Rev. The prevent of the honor of the Rev. Dr. John P. and Mrs. Peters of the Church of St. Michael was a happy afternoon down in Irving place.

And cheers. Altogether it w

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